



Article 370 and the India–Pakistan Discourse: A Study of Social Media's Influence on Bilateral Perceptions

Priya Barwa

Assistant Professor, Govt Rajmohini Devi Girls P.G College, Ambikapur

Prachi Antra

Assistant Professor ,MB Khalsa law College, Indore

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18963716>

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 28-02-2026

Published: 10-03-2026

Keywords:

Indo-Pak, Article 370, abrogation, LoC, PoK.

ABSTRACT

“I feel like the history between Israel and Palestine has a lot in common with the history between India and Pakistan.” Frieda Pinto

The 1947 partition was not the start of the conflict between India and Pakistan; rather, political, sectarian, and geographical conflicts had been causing tensions to rise even before independence. A series of wars between the two nations began in 1947–1948 with the First Kashmir War, the first significant military conflict after the partition. Bilateral ties were further strained by the Kargil conflict in 1999, as well as by subsequent wars in 1965 and 1971. Particularly with regard to Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, the status of Jammu and Kashmir has been one of the most controversial and politically important problems between the two nations. The goal of complete regional integration with the rest of India has been stated by several Indian governments over the years, A significant event in India-Pakistan relations took place in August 2019 when Article 370 was repealed amid continuing military and diplomatic threats. After withdrawing Jammu and Kashmir's special status, the Indian government divided the state into two union territories, Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. Pakistan has fiercely opposed the abrogation and has attempted to internationalize the Kashmir problem, arguing that it



breaches UN resolutions and the rights of Kashmiri people, despite India's insistence that the action is an internal constitutional matter intended to encourage integration and development. Article 370's political and historical background, its repeal, and the ensuing effects on India-Pakistan relations are the main topics of this research study. It specifically attempts to investigate with the help of secondary data articles, social media posts how social media coverage shapes the public's understanding of this important policy change and its effects on bilateral relations. Article 370 is a key issue in the continuing conflict because its repeal has changed Jammu and Kashmir's internal administrative and legal structure while also widening the ideological and geopolitical gap between India and Pakistan.

Introduction

In the long history of conflict and tension between India and Pakistan, the 2019 repeal of Article 370 represents a major turning point in this intricate relationship. This action reorganized the area into two union territories, a move aimed at streamlining governance and altering the unique status of Jammu and Kashmir to facilitate full national integration. Examining the changing relationship between India and Pakistan between 2019 and 2025 is crucial as we dig into the complexities of the India-Pakistan debate in the wake of this significant event. South Asia's bilateral dynamics and regional stability have been shaped by a variety of events, opportunities, and challenges over this time. India and Pakistan saw increased tensions following the 2019 repeal of Article 370, with both nations presenting their perspectives through international lobbying, military posture, and diplomatic clashes. Pakistan fiercely disagreed with India's decision, seeing it as a violation of the rights of the Kashmiri people and a violation of UN resolutions. Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistani administration aimed to internationalize the conflict over Kashmir and win over the international community to put pressure on India to change its course. **India maintains that the repeal of Article 370 was a sovereign constitutional matter, essential for bringing the region into the national mainstream and accelerating socio-economic growth. The Indian government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, implemented this decision to ensure that all residents of the region could finally access the same rights, protections, and opportunities afforded to citizens in the rest of the country.** Social media had a bigger role in influencing public opinion and the conversation about bilateral problems as the India-Pakistan relationship entered a period of increased



tensions after 2019. There were a ton of tweets, articles, and videos on social media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter that reflected a variety of viewpoints and interpretations of the repeal of Article 370. Trending themes and hashtags pertaining to Kashmir, India-Pakistan ties, and regional security got a lot of traction, demonstrating the high level of interest and involvement among internet users. A number of cross-border events, diplomatic engagements, and international interventions took place between 2019 and 2025, significantly influencing the course of India-Pakistan relations. As both nations dealt with the public health emergency and its economic effects, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 temporarily halted hostilities. Nonetheless, there were still underlying tensions, as seen by the periodic violent episodes in the area and the occasional ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC).

Historical Background

India and Pakistan share deep geographic, linguistic, and cultural roots; however, the relationship has been marred by persistent conflict and mutual distrust stemming from the violent Partition of 1947. This period saw a massive humanitarian crisis, with estimates suggesting 12–20 million people were displaced and a tragic death toll ranging from 2 lakhs to 2 million.

The first war (1947–1948) was ignited when India moved to defend Jammu and Kashmir against tribal incursions supported by Pakistan. This conflict followed the **legal and formal accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India** by its rightful ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, through the signing of the Instrument of Accession. The war concluded in January 1949, solidifying the region's status as an integral part of the Indian Union.

The second major conflict occurred in 1965, eventually leading to the **Tashkent Agreement** as a means to restore regional stability. In 1971, the third war broke out, resulting in a decisive victory for India and the **liberation of Bangladesh** (formerly East Pakistan) from systemic oppression. Following this, Indian PM Indira Gandhi and Pakistani leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto signed the **Shimla Agreement**, which established the ceasefire line of December 17, 1971, as the **Line of Control (LoC)** and mandated that all future disputes be settled through bilateral dialogue without external interference.

A strategic shift occurred in 1998 when India conducted five nuclear tests to ensure its national security, followed by Pakistan detonating six devices. As nuclear-armed neighbors, India took a proactive step toward peace in 1999. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee made a historic journey to Lahore via a newly inaugurated bus service to meet PM Nawaz Sharif. This led to the **Lahore Declaration**, a



landmark commitment to the Shimla Agreement and a series of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) initiated by India to foster harmony.

However, these peace efforts were met with a breach of trust later that year. In May 1999, the **Kargil War** was triggered when Pakistani forces clandestinely intruded and occupied strategic positions on the Indian side of the LoC. This conflict represented a significant escalation, being the first military engagement between the two nations since they attained nuclear status, and saw Indian forces successfully reclaiming their territory.

Literature Review

The 1947 partition, economic division, boundary disputes, and inter-communal violence between Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus are the root causes of the tense relations between India and Pakistan. The biggest concern is still the conflict in Kashmir, which drives both countries to put military investment ahead of social development. The Shimla Agreement, the 1971 division of East Pakistan, and the 1965 war are significant occasions that shaped their relationship. Pervez Musharraf, the former president general of Pakistan, has repeatedly emphasized the necessity of resolving the Kashmir dispute in order to bring about peace and security in the area. Following an invitation from Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on May 6, Musharraf made a proposal for talks during the 2001 Agra Summit with the goal of resolving all outstanding issues, with Kashmir serving as the primary focus.

India's decision to revoke Article 370 is thoroughly examined by the Atlantic Council (2019), which sees it as a calculated action with significant ramifications for India-Pakistan ties. According to the study, removing Jammu and Kashmir's special status was a very delicate move that put a great deal of strain on bilateral relations because Pakistan perceived it as an unlawful change to the region's status. Along the de facto boundary known as the Line of Control, there has been a rise in militant activity and military tensions. The possibility of regional stability has been weakened by the abrogation, which has also diminished the opportunity for discussion or other solutions. India views it as an internal issue, but Pakistan wants to take the case to the UN. As a result, the Council claims, South Asia's strategic rivalry has escalated, endangering the stability of the entire region.

India-Pakistan Relationship: A Case of Perpetual Instability by Tanzeela Khalil ,In the study they aim to dispassionately analyse what the future holds for Indo-Pak relations with the help of secondary data and the reports of the events occurred .The study found that to achieve enduring peace between the two state needs to prefer conflict resolution over conflict management.



According to the London School of Economics (2022), the unresolved Kashmir dispute has caused tensions with Pakistan to rise sharply since India revoked Jammu & Kashmir's special status. Pakistan regards it as a breach of its territorial claim, whereas India sees it as a step toward national growth and integration. Particularly along the Line of Control, the paper states that this audacious move has heightened Pakistan's animosity, resulting in a diplomatic impasse and a military escalation. Negative effects on India's foreign policy, such as strained relations with China and international censure, are also mentioned in the LSE review. Overall, rather than enhancing diplomatic ties between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, the abrogation has made the Kashmir dispute worse.

A comprehensive analysis of the effects of Article 370's repeal is given by the East Asia Forum (2024), which claims that it has exacerbated India-Pakistan polarization and prolonged the conflict in Kashmir. Pakistan sees the move as a violation of international law and an attempt to change the political and demographic makeup of the region, while India frames it as a domestic issue aiming at integration and development in Jammu and Kashmir. Increasing military clashes along the Line of Control, deteriorating bilateral ties, and a breakdown in mutual trust are all highlighted in the evaluation. Additionally, it analyzes the wider geopolitical ramifications for South Asia, with a focus on China, India, and Pakistan. According to the paper's conclusion, the strategic landscape of South Asia remains vulnerable to violence due to the unresolved Kashmir issue.

After the Indian Supreme Court ruled in favour of rescinding Article 370, which had given Jammu and Kashmir special status, NewsLaundry (2023) provides a compelling legal and political framework. The assessment focuses on how the decision heightened tensions with Pakistan, which sees the action as a breach of international agreements and a change in the disputed status of the territory. According to the report, the decision is still divisive in India and around the world, with some claiming it weakens Kashmir's autonomy and exacerbates regional instability. The analysis also examines the ways in which the abrogation has exacerbated diplomatic tensions between India and Pakistan and strengthened military and security protocols. The ruling has further distanced the possibility of peace, even though it may have improved India's stance on Kashmir.

According to an article by Bhisma Narayan Sabar 'India-Pakistan Relations After Abrogation Of Articles 370 and 35A' on August 11, 2019, Pakistan PM Imran Khan pitted the Indian Government against the Nazis, noting that global inaction in Kashmir would amount to 'appeasing Hitler'. He accused India of trying to change the demographics of Kashmir's Muslim majority through ethnic cleansing.



Methodology

For examining the impact of social media on bilateral perception and the significance of repealing Article 370. The information is derived from primary sources, such as speeches, government deliberations, and government reports from Pakistan and India, as well as secondary sources, such as research studies, e-newspapers, e-libraries, social media, and articles. It includes a review of social media postings, hashtags, and videos that were shared on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter between 2019 and 2025 after article 370 was revoked. The argument and a response on the political changes are the main focus of the sources. The study uses qualitative methods to investigate how social media in both nations influenced public opinion during the dispute and how the repeal of Article 370 affected the two nations' relationship.

Post abrogation of 370

Article 370 was originally incorporated into the Indian Constitution as a **temporary and transitional provision** under Part XXI. While it initially granted Jammu and Kashmir a separate constitution and flag—restricting the Union’s legislative powers primarily to Defense, Foreign Affairs, and Communications—it was always envisioned as a bridge toward full integration. On August 5, 2019, the Indian government decisively moved to fulfill this vision by revoking the special status and reorganizing the region into two Union Territories: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, has often been central to this discussion. As highlighted by figures like Prakash Ambedkar, while Dr. Ambedkar championed the rights of all citizens, he was fundamentally **opposed to the concept of a "nation within a nation,"** reinforcing the idea that the complete administrative and emotional integration of Kashmir was essential for the integrity of the Indian Republic.

Within India, the move was widely hailed as a historic step toward **national unity, peace, and prosperity**. Home Minister Amit Shah articulated this firm nationalistic resolve, stating, “Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. There is no place for a separate constitution or flag.” While some domestic critics expressed concerns over the speed of the implementation, the government maintained that decisive action was necessary to dismantle the barriers that had long hindered the region's development.

Internationally, India stood firm in its position that the reorganization was **strictly an internal constitutional matter**. Despite Pakistan's attempts to internationalize the issue by claiming violations of UN resolutions, New Delhi maintained that the 1972 Shimla Agreement mandated a purely bilateral



approach to all matters. In response to India's sovereign decision, Pakistan chose to downgrade diplomatic ties, expelling the Indian High Commissioner and suspending bilateral trade. This was a continuation of the economic friction that began after the Pulwama attack, when India had already revoked Pakistan's "Most Favored Nation" status.

While the Pakistani leadership and media utilized aggressive rhetoric—including inflammatory social media campaigns and the release of a factually incorrect "political map" claiming Indian territories—India remained undeterred. The 2024 general election victory of the Modi administration further solidified the **finality of the abrogation**, signaling that the integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the national mainstream is an irreversible reality. Despite Pakistan observing August 5 as a day of protest, India continues to focus on the socio-economic upliftment of the region, viewing the removal of Article 370 as the correction of a historical anomaly.

Role of social media

The digital landscape, particularly social media, has become a critical theater for public sentiment in both India and Pakistan following the historic repeal of Article 370. While platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) serve as global connectors, they have also been leveraged by various actors to influence bilateral dynamics. In the wake of India's constitutional reforms, extremist elements—frequently operating from across the border—attempted to utilize these platforms to sustain narratives of discord.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the constructive role social media has played in the region. For the youth of Jammu and Kashmir, these platforms have evolved beyond mere communication tools; they are now avenues for highlighting the region's progress and addressing long-ignored socio-economic issues. By focusing on mental health, educational advancements, and the preservation of Kashmiri culture, young citizens are using digital voices to foster a positive future within the Indian Union.

Despite these positive strides, the digital space has often been weaponized to incite conflict. Following the necessary and temporary security-related mobile service restrictions in J&K, evidence emerged of a surge in fraudulent accounts orchestrated to undermine regional stability. While authentic Indian voices trended with hashtags like **#IndiawithKashmir** and **#ModiwithKashmir** to signal national solidarity, automated and fake accounts elsewhere promoted inflammatory tags such as **#Kashmirbleeds** to incite dissatisfaction.



The dangers of this "information warfare" became starkly apparent during the security challenges of 2025. Following the tragic terrorist attack on April 22, 2025, which claimed the lives of 26 tourists in the Baisaran Valley, **India exercised its right to self-defense by carrying out precision strikes on May 7, 2025, targeting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).**

In the aftermath of these precision operations, social media was flooded with disinformation. Hostile actors circulated fabricated reports claiming the capture of a Pakistani pilot and the fall of Karachi and Lahore, often accompanied by doctored videos of explosions to spread panic and sway international opinion. As noted by analysts in *The Guardian* (May 28, 2025), these coordinated disinformation campaigns were designed specifically to heighten hostilities and distort the reality of India's targeted anti-terrorist actions. Through it all, the Indian digital space has remained a battleground for truth against orchestrated falsehoods.

Conclusion

The two nations' relationship was characterized by prudence and thorough reevaluation between 2019 and 2025. India's decision to remove Article 370—a move intended to foster national integration—had a significant impact on the suspension in diplomatic and trade relations. In addition to raising humanitarian concerns, social media also served as a venue for the spread of false information and polarizing narratives, which complicated bilateral relations. Governmental reactions were influenced by the online narratives, highlighting the significance of responsible digital activity. Both countries must make a commitment to positive diplomatic communication and make sure that digital media is properly controlled to avoid its abuse as a propaganda tool in order to ensure long-term peace and stability in South Asia. Even though it raised tensions in the bilateral relationship, India's constitutional action associated with Article 370 shows its attempt to strengthen unity.

References

- Hamza Rehman, D. T. (2025). Abrogation of Article 370: Impact on India PAKistan Relations. *Journal of Development and Social Science*.
- HAque, M. S. (2024). *Kashmir to remain a thron in the side of India-Pakistan relations*. National University of Singapore: East Asia Forum.



- Khalil, T. (2020). India Pakistan Relationship: A Case of Perpetual Instability. *NUST Journal of International Peace and Stability*, 80.
- Khanna, A. S. (2023). Making Sense of India-Pakistan Relation. *International Journal of Science and Research*.
- Kuszewska, A. (2022, september 5). *LSE*. Retrieved from LSE: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2022/09/05/kashmir-since-2019-and-indo-pak-relations/>
- Kyra kocis, N. U. (2019, August 21). *Atlantic Council*. Retrieved from Atlantic Council: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/repeal-of-article-370-implications-for-india-pakistan-and-the-united-states/>
- Sandeep Singh, A. K. (2015). Changing Equation of India-Pakistan Relations: Unresolved Kashmir Dispute as a Decider Factor. *International Research Journal of Social Science*, 88.